

Washington State  
Family Policy Council



**WORKING  
DRAFT**

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# Field Guide

## Reviewing Community Efforts

Compiled for Washington's  
Community Public Health and Safety Networks  
Family Policy Agencies  
And  
Partners

Chapter 70.190 RCW  
Section 110, "Program Review"



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## Introduction

Many Community Public Health and Safety Networks across the state have requested a Field Guide to help them through the complex process of Reviewing Community Efforts, as required by Chapter 70.190.110 of the Revised Code of Washington. This guide is a work-in-progress, intended both to assist Networks in conducting these reviews and to spark constructive discussion about how the process can be improved.

This “working guide” includes one model of an actual review process that was used by Clallam County Community Network in the summer of 2000. This sample model, developed by a professional evaluator working closely with the Network, focuses on a single service for a specific small population. It is offered as a successful example of one certain type of analysis and not as the definitive model of how to conduct a review. Suggestions for other approaches can be found in these pages as well, along with background information, step-by-step instructions and practical strategies for success.

We fully expect that many changes will be made to this Field Guide in the future as we all learn more—through experience—about conducting effective reviews.

## A State and Local Partnership

In 1992, as a step toward improving state services for children and families, Washington lawmakers officially established the Family Policy Council. This inter-agency Council consists of two Senators, two Representatives, four directors of state agencies involved with children and families, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and a representative from the Governor's Office. FPC member agencies include the Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Health, the Employment Security Department and the Office of Community Development.

The Family Policy Council is charged with making social programs and policies more responsive to the needs of modern families. It is specifically directed to coordinate efforts between agencies while moving toward a community-based approach to family services.

As part of this shift toward locally based services, the Council oversees the work of more than 50 Community Public Health and Safety Networks across the state. Washington's Community Networks were established by the Legislature in 1994 as a way to give our communities a larger role in tackling their own social problems. Founded on the concept of local-level collaboration, Networks function essentially as community versions of the Family Policy Council.

## A Review Required By Law

One specific task assigned to Networks is the periodic review of state- and federally funded programs and services. Networks are asked to determine whether or not these programs might be made more effective through:

- Local management of a program
- "Decategorization" of a program, either by rule (removing strict categorical regulations to improve integration of services) or by funding (allowing funds now allocated in strict program categories to be used wherever most urgently needed)

When a Network undertakes a Review of Community Efforts it *must* address these two issues according to detailed criteria set forth in Chapter 70.190.110 of the Revised Code of Washington—although it may address other issues as well.

Reviewing all programs funded with state and federal dollars is an enormous and daunting task. Due to both limited budgets and the sweeping scope of the work, the Council and Networks will need to proceed in measured, strategic phases. Reviews of Community Efforts will take place first in communities that can demonstrate they are ready to take on this type of work and where FPC member agencies are able to offer support.

## Understanding What is Expected

The purpose of a formal review is to determine how well programs and service are working together to help improve the lives of children and families. Even when individual programs are yielding good results, the combined effect of all programs may fall short of community goals. Valid, reliable data should be used to measure both program-level outcomes and community-wide results. For more complete information see *Using Outcome Data in Your Review*, page 11.

The review process should engage service providers, professionals, customers and the public in an honest discussion of policies and of ways of doing business that will lead to crucial improvements in the lives of their neighbors and friends. The focus should be on people and their experiences with the programs, not on the technical issues of program administration.

Each Review of Community Efforts must consider specific criteria (integration and coordination of services, responsiveness to the customer, cost effectiveness, etc.) set forth in Chapter 70.190 RCW. For a complete list of these requirements and how they affect your review see *Meeting Legal Criteria*, page 8.

While Chapter 70.190.110 RCW includes a detailed list of programs and services, this list should be seen as a guideline and not as the standard for review. Networks should start by selecting a focus population, then identifying some specific set of services needed and used by that group. Networks are not necessarily expected to review all these related programs and services at once. The initial review will likely concentrate on a single program that is clearly defined by its purpose, its funding and its reporting requirements. Subsequent reviews would focus on other related programs and services. If a Network chooses to review more than one program simultaneously, it should take special care to understand each program individually—perhaps by including an expert on each program early in the process—before moving on to review the constellation of programs as a whole.

Once a review is completed, the Network will submit a report to the Family Policy Council that includes the explicit recommendations required by lawmakers. The Council, in consultation with FPC member agencies, will ultimately decide which of these recommendations should be forwarded to the Legislature or Governor for further consideration.

Comprehensive Reviews of Community Efforts are distinct from the smaller-scale Proposals to Facilitate Services that Networks are asked to submit annually under Chapter 70.190.030 RCW. Proposals submitted under Section 030 are less formal, smaller in scale and based on a Network's experience with the local programs and services it has supported in the previous year.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

A Review of Community Efforts is the joint responsibility of individual Networks, the Family Policy Council and FPC member agencies. While each administrative partner has a specific role in the process, all partners will have to cooperate in order to complete a successful review. Networks and member agencies will need to work together on a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) that details the roles and duties of all the major parties involved in a specific review.

### **Role of the Family Policy Council**

Basic responsibilities of the Council and FPC staff will include:

- Prompt and careful review of Network submissions (proposed models, M.O.U.s, recommendations for change, etc.)
- Providing a clear explanation for why a submission has not been accepted
- Forwarding approved final recommendations to the Legislature or Governor

### **Role of FPC Member Agencies**

Basic responsibilities of FPC member agencies will include, as needed:

- Communicating clearly to affected staff and contractors that the agency supports this review and welcomes its eventual recommendations
- Designating a “point person” to serve as a liaison with the Network through the review process
- Releasing pertinent data from available data sets
- Providing technical assistance in interpreting that data
- Releasing recent agency reports or materials related to the goals of the review
- Responding to surveys or questionnaires developed for the review
- Inviting service customers and/or their families to participate in the review
- Reviewing final report/recommendations and forwarding comments to the FPC

### **Role of Community Public Health and Safety Networks**

Individual Networks will shoulder the bulk of the work. Their responsibilities will include:

- Funding or acquiring funds to cover financial costs (hiring a qualified coordinator, collecting additional data, hosting events, etc.)
- Active participation of board members
- Designing a model for the review

- Communicating clearly with the Council and member agencies
- Notifying the public of proposed recommendations and providing an opportunity for public response
- Answering questions from the Legislature regarding recommendations forwarded by the Family Policy Council
- Following up on recommendations that come out of the review
- Monitoring data to see if changes are taking place



## Meeting Legal Criteria

While the law does not dictate how individual Networks should conduct Reviews of Community Efforts, Chapter 70.190 RCW does include a list of specific criteria that must be considered by Networks in the course of each review.

- Would local management result in greater community support for the program under review?
- Is the program already integrated and coordinated with other programs designed to produce similar outcomes?
- Are programs and services responsive to the customer?
- Are individual problems treated in the context of the family?
- Does the program assure adequate follow-up? Could follow-up be improved through decategorization?
- Are staff members trained in crossing traditional program categories in order to supply needed services?
- Does the program deliver intended outcomes?
- Is outcome data used to improve the program?
- Would decategorization of the program benefit the community?
- Would decategorization help the community meet its goals of reducing problem behaviors and/or out-of-home placement of children?
- Can the community develop the local capacity to provide the service?
- Do eligibility criteria, spending restrictions and reporting requirements of categorical programs hinder the effective use of resources?
- Is it possible to use program resources flexibly?
- Are recommendations resulting from your review likely to result in a more cost-effective program or community effort?

Each Network will need to determine how it should evaluate these issues. One way to start is by asking “What factors would indicate that programs and services are fully integrated and coordinated with each other? That a program has adequate follow-up? That our staff members are cross-trained?”

In the sample Review Model developed for Clallam Community Network (included in this Field Guide), legislative criteria were sorted under five basic headings: Program Planning, Responsiveness, Coordination and Integration, Outcomes Orientation and Funding Considerations. Questionnaires and interview/summary forms were developed for all five headings, each with questions and ratings designed to address legislative concerns.

Many Networks may find this model useful in gathering the information they need to meet the required criteria. Others may prefer to develop their own approach by discussing the list of criteria—and what factors should be examined in order to rate local programs—with program representatives and review committee members.

## Discussing Decategorization

Nearly all programs under review will be affected in some way by strict categorical regulations concerning funding or rules. In some cases these constraints may actually be beneficial. Even where change is desirable, there may already be means in place to waive or partially waive categorical requirements. In other cases, however, reviews may conclude that decategorization is a desirable step toward improving programs and services.

The concept of potential decategorization will undoubtedly—and understandably—raise some sensitive issues for service professionals, advocacy groups and others who have worked hard to secure dedicated funding and programs for specific populations. It's important not to assume that the real objections have to do with protecting job security or defending personal turf. A careful hearing will often yield valid, sincere concerns that should be acknowledged and addressed by all of the parties involved.

Discussions of categorical funding and regulations should focus on the problems faced by families and children, not on changes in “ownership” among programs designed to serve them. These discussions should always be guided by Family Policy Principles and the legislative purpose of our Family Policy Partnership:

- To empower communities to support and respond to the needs of families and children;
- To make services more responsive through greater coordination and flexibility in the use of funds by state and local service agencies.

The purpose of your review is to determine whether or not these principles are well served by existing categorical funding and rules and—if not—what changes should be made to better achieve these goals.

### If Decategorization is Recommended

In order to recommend decategorization, the review team must convincingly argue that categorization—either by rule or by funding—hinders the effectiveness of a program or service and that decategorization would improve this situation. Their final report must contain a proposal for the use of decategorized funds, a proposed method for measuring the effects of the change and an estimation of the time period needed for testing decategorization results. It should also recommend how rapidly decategorization should take place and how decategorized funds should be distributed in the community.

Any recommendation for the decategorization of programs or services is legally required to be based on the following criteria:

- Programs or services are already integrated with other programs and with community goals
- An identified local organization could develop the capacity to deliver services after decategorization
- Program goals would receive greater community support after decategorization
- Adequate follow-up is built into the system so that positive change is lasting
- Decategorization would help the community in achieving its goals

Networks will also want to consider whether or not decategorization would help programs to:

- Treat the problems of the individual in the context of the family
- Offer a broad spectrum of services

- Be flexible in the use of program resources
- Use staff who are trained in working across traditional program boundaries in order to better serve families and children

### **If Decategorization is Not Recommended**

Where decategorization is not recommended, the final report should present evidence that current categorical requirements do not impede the effectiveness of a program or service. Your review may conclude that changes other than decategorization are more important in achieving Network goals. If so, the report should include recommendations for improving the coordination and integration of all programs and services, regardless of how they are funded.

### **Approval of Recommendations**

If the Family Policy Council finds the argument for decategorization or other changes to be sound, the Council will forward the Network's recommendation to the Legislature or the Governor for appropriate action.

## Using Outcome Data in Your Review

The purpose of gathering outcome data is to measure the desirable changes brought about by a specific program or constellation of programs. These changes or outcomes are defined as improvements in attitudes, skills, behavior, knowledge or status—in individual customers or in the community as a whole—that help children and families to thrive.

“Direct outcomes” are measured in order to determine whether or not a single program is achieving a specific result. For example, the intent of a parenting class is to improve the knowledge and skills of the parents who are enrolled. By measuring (through testing or surveys) the knowledge and skills of enrollees before they begin the class and again after completion, reviewers can determine whether or not the program is achieving that particular goal. Direct outcome data also provides useful information for changing and improving individual programs and services.

“Indirect outcomes” are measured to determine the overall effectiveness of a collective system of services. For example, if the goal of the overall system is to reduce out-of-home placements for children, the rates of out-of-home placements would be tracked over an extended period of time. Networks and their partners would monitor this type of data to learn how families are doing and to focus community efforts where rates have not improved.

In monitoring indirect outcomes, it is important to understand that results can be affected by a very wide range of factors. Population changes, economic conditions, changes in law or procedures and the elimination of programs are only a few of the elements that may affect the rates you are trying to track—even when specific programs are improving direct outcomes. Nevertheless, community efforts should be scrutinized (within the full context of factors) when rates do not improve.

## Deciding Which Changes to Measure

The changes or outcomes you measure in your review should reflect both the specific purpose of an individual program (improving skills, expanding knowledge, increasing employment, etc.) and its broader community goals. One useful way to establish the relationship between direct and indirect changes is to outline the links, step by step, in an exercise known as a “so/that chain.”

A parenting program strives to:

- Provide child-development information and training in parenting skills
- So that parents increase child-development knowledge and parenting skills
- So that parents are better prepared to raise their children
- So that parents do not mistreat their children
- So that child abuse and neglect are reduced

A “so/that chain” helps focus the review on outcomes that customers can reasonably be expected to achieve and that ultimately contribute to the larger goals of the community.

Reviewers should not be tempted to measure only those changes that are easily accomplished in the hope that favorable data will reflect well on a program or service. It is only by asking hard questions and collecting valid data that we can learn what works, what doesn’t, and how programs can be improved.

## **Measuring Results**

Once you have chosen the change(s) you want to measure, there are two primary requirements for meaningful data collection:

- **Data must be valid**

The data you collect must accurately assess the change(s) you've chosen to measure. If you are measuring a change in knowledge, for example, that knowledge must be measured both before and after the delivery of services.

- **Measuring tools (including people) must be reliable**

Even the most valid measuring tool is useless if it is not applied in a reliable and consistent manner. If more than one person will be collecting data, detailed instructions must be developed and tested carefully to ensure that data-collecting procedures are easy to understand and follow. Data collection must be performed in the same manner every time, no matter who does the collecting.

## **Maintaining Reasonable Expectations**

It is unreasonable to hold a single program accountable for the wholesale improvement of indirect outcomes throughout the community, or to expect unrealistically high rates of positive change.

Individual programs can and should be willing to measure the direct outcomes of the activities they provide and to use that data to improve and strengthen their programs and services.

## **Using Data in Future Reviews**

At this point no Network has valid and reliable outcome data about every program, and certainly not the kinds of data that would be credible for comparing and contrasting the effectiveness of different programs, as directed by RCW 70.190. The development of meaningful data is an essential step toward improving local programs and discovering what works best in your own community.

# Reviewing Community Efforts

## A Step by Step Guide

It's important for Networks to realize that there is no single "right" way to conduct an effective review. Each community is shaped by its own unique set of factors—relationships, cultures, successes and failures, readiness to collaborate—and each review will need to be tailored accordingly. There are, however, some basic steps that all Networks should find useful in completing a review.

### 1. Assess community readiness

Successful reviews are built on a foundation of openness, trust and respect. The network and its partners should talk frankly with each other about how ready they are to:

- Agree on the desired results of programs and services
- Monitor program results in a constructive manner
- Refrain from defensive responses
- Work together in managing resources
- Fully use the strengths of partners from different backgrounds and disciplines to improve the lives of families and children

The community may not be ready to proceed with a formal review of its efforts until these planks are in place.

### 2. Assess the Network's own readiness

Each Network must make an honest assessment of whether or not it is prepared to lead the community through a formal review. Networks should first evaluate their own:

- organizational capabilities
- prior experience with collaborative work

- knowledge of neighborhood needs and potential
- success in attracting wide support from local governments, agencies and funding sources
- ability to take on a demanding new project while still meeting current commitments

### **3. Narrow the field of potential focus populations**

Choose a few well-defined populations for whom you have great passion, concern and interest. You will probably want to concentrate on populations that need and use multiple services.

Gather information on each potential participant group by talking to experienced professionals and to group members themselves. Among the things you will need to determine:

- Important goals for each population that the current system may not be achieving
- Level of interest and commitment among those who would be involved in the review
- Whether the review would be more credible to all involved if coordinated by Network staff or by a professional coordinator

Make sure everyone understands that a final focus population and relevant programs have not yet been chosen for review and promise to let all contacts know when a decision is finally made. Follow through by providing timely feedback to everyone who has helped.

### **4. Select a single, well-defined population and one or more programs used by that group as the focus of your review.**

You will also need to identify—at this point or later in the process—other related support programs used by the focus population. This information will be helpful both for rating coordination between programs and in developing a model for your review.

### **5. Recruit a review committee**

In consultation with the Network, this committee will execute the remaining steps of the review process. Members may include Network volunteers, program/service providers, program/service users and advocates, community residents or other interested parties.

### **6. Adopt or develop a model for your review**

This model should specify:

- the specific program(s) you expect to review
- the process you plan to use
- the roles of each participant
- what factors will be studied to assess current integration of community efforts (coordination, flexibility, follow-up, etc.)
- what data will be studied to assess program/service results
- how and when you will involve customers, professionals, network volunteers and members of the public
- what actions you may need from FPC member agencies
- an approximate timeline for the review

A sample of one type of model and suggestions for developing others are included in this Field Guide, beginning on page 20.

## **7. Circulate the proposed model for comment**

Send your proposed model to providers, funders, advocates and other potentially affected parties for review and suggestions

Submit your proposed model to the FPC for review. Be sure to include:

- Any requests for assistance from FPC member agencies
- Names of local staffers from FPC member agencies who are willing to help with your review.
- A draft Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Network, FPC member agencies and their local employees or contractors.

## **8. Adjust the model as necessary**

Based on community and FPC feedback, make changes to the model in order to:

- make the best possible use of available data
- maximize community support for the review.

## **9. Submit the adjusted model and M.O.U to FPC for final approval**

## **10. Conduct the Review**

## **11. Report findings/recommendations to the FPC and other participants**

Recommendations that do not require FPC approval include:

- Changes to service delivery
- Changes in focus of programs/services
- Changes to structure of programs/services

Recommendations that must be approved by the FPC:

- Local-level management of programs/services funded by state or federal dollars
- Decategorization (either by rule or by funding) of programs /services funded by state or federal dollars

If decategorization is recommended in your report, be sure to address all criteria listed in Chapter 70.190.110.

If decategorization is not recommended, include suggestions for improving coordination between reviewed programs and services (regardless of how they are funded).

## **12. Create a follow-up process**



Develop a process for following up on recommended changes and to support community partners as they work to bring change about. This could mean recruiting a follow-up team or creating a stronger role for network representatives in the program's advisory board.

**13. Follow through on recommendations**

Request periodic progress reports from the follow-up team or representatives and track ongoing rates of problem behaviors to determine whether or not goals are being met.

## Strategies for Conducting a Successful Review

**Start small.** Early reviews should concentrate on one program or a small constellation of programs and services used by a specific population. Expand the review strategically when you're ready to take the next step. (What programs are aimed at your focus population but seldom used by them? What programs are used by those "at risk" of joining your focus group?)

**Decide where you are headed.** Some Networks may choose to focus on the formal system of agency programs in the belief that more effective programs alone will reduce problem behaviors. Other Networks may want to eventually examine both formal and informal systems of support (neighborhoods, religious communities, extended families, volunteers, etc.), in the belief that reduction goals will be met by improving both official agency services and the customer's everyday life. This decision should be made early on. A Network choosing the second option will want to ensure the active involvement of customers and neighborhoods right from the very beginning, even if the initial review focuses on a formal program.

**Be clear about what you're reviewing.** Make sure everyone involved understands the purpose of the review and how it relates to your Network's mission. While specific criteria are listed in Chapter 70.190.110, it is possible to include additional criteria in your review. (You may want, for example, to evaluate how well local programs and services have achieved their desired results.) Limit additions to one or two themes that are logically linked to your current work. Wherever practical, include affected parties in decisions about what to add.

**Clearly identify the population at the center of your work.** The programs and services you are reviewing should be focused on a single, well-defined population. You will probably want to choose a group that needs and uses more than one kind of family support.

**Know why you are choosing a specific cluster of programs and services to review.**

Is your Network still building trust in the community? You may want to start with programs managed by long-standing partners with whom you have worked well before. Is your Network focused on prevention? You might consider reviewing intervention/interdiction-type programs with the aim of improving effectiveness and reducing financial costs (potentially freeing up funds for prevention-end programs and services). If your Network has good local data on the effectiveness of such programs, however, a review of prevention-based programs may make perfect sense.

**Develop an in-depth understanding of each program separately before reviewing a cluster of programs as a system.** Reviewers must have a thorough understanding of each program's objectives and constraints in order to fairly evaluate them according to legal criteria. You may choose to review one program at a time, then consider all reviewed programs as an inter-related system (as in the Sample Model Process for Review found on page 20.) Alternatively, you might invite experts to share their in-depth understanding of individual programs during a coordinated review of multiple programs (as in the Self Governance Dialogue process referenced on page 33.)

**Develop a shared vision.** Since collaborative governance is consensual, any member may choose to leave at any given time. A firm belief in a shared purpose helps keep everyone moving forward.

**Build credibility at every step.** Gather credible information using reliable methods. Be sure to consider both the experience of lay citizens and the scientific analysis of social service professionals.

**Document everything.** Maintain a written record of all participants, processes, substantive findings and conclusions, recommendations and agreements.

**Formalize changing relationships as they emerge.** As relationships develop and deepen during the review process, new ways of doing business are likely to emerge. Document and formalize these organizational changes (a new parent policy council, a new Memorandum of Understanding, etc.), making sure that all parties agree.

**Lead without ego.** Facilitators, staff and key leaders will need to employ “purposeful humility” throughout the entire review process. Social services professionals must be willing to listen and work with lay citizens who bring other views to the table. Everyone needs to remember that we’re all in this for the same reason: to help children and families to thrive.

## **For Further Assistance**

For further assistance or more information about Reviewing Community Efforts contact:

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# Sample Model Process for Review of Community Efforts

Prepared by Katherine A. Carlson, Ph.D., June 2001

This model format was piloted in a review of the Consolidated Juvenile Services program in Clallam County by the Clallam County Community Network. It is designed to help a Network gain detailed understanding of a single program, or to evaluate a cluster of programs and services offered to a certain population by reviewing those programs one at a time.

## PURPOSE

The common parameters for all program reviews are outlined in the characteristics found by the Legislature to be associated with successful programs as stated in the RCW. Overall, these encompass and reinforce the Family Policy Principles and, like these, primarily concern the processes of service delivery. As such, the purpose of program review by the community networks is to examine the means rather than the ends of services.

The categorical review is explicitly charged to focus on process or service delivery, with this review also to be guided by the parameters of effective programs. An additional charge associated with the review of categorical funding is to determine the extent to which service delivery (and by extension, outcomes) would be improved if funding were decategorized or there were other programmatic changes. In this, the operational consequences of current categorical funding procedures are clearly the intended focus, with findings about these to be considered in regard to community interests and possible alternatives. The network is to utilize the results of the categorical funding review to recommend ways in which program processes and/or funding could be improved to better accord with the principles found to be associated with successful programs.

## APPROACH

The focus of the review is to be a single program or agency service from the list of those identified in the legislation. The review process is envisioned as a collaboration between the network and the program. It is recommended that a committee of 3-5 network members be appointed to conduct the review. The committee would report the results of the review and any recommendations to the full network board for adoption and any necessary actions. The process for conducting a review of categorical funding includes several sequential steps: 1) Program Information; 2) Program Interview; 3) Committee Review Summary; and, 4) Network Discussion, Adoption, and Actions. The schedule for the review must allow for sufficient time for all steps, and should be coordinated with representatives of the program under review to ensure full attention to their completion.

### 1. Program Information

The first step of the review is the completion of the *Program Information Questionnaire*. The contents of the questionnaire cover the stated concerns of the Legislature and encompass the principles of the effective programs. These questions are to be answered by program directors or their representatives. One to two weeks should be allowed for the agency to respond and return the completed questionnaire. The written responses should be brief, but with sufficient detail to explain key program features and

characteristics. The questionnaire includes five topical sections. Each section is divided into several sub-sections with specific questions. These questions are designed to elicit a full presentation of information and issues that are most relevant to the review. They are to serve as guidelines for responses, with information added as needed to better characterize the program and its processes.

Documents that describe the program and review its activities are to be included with the completed questionnaire. These should include any program contracts and statements of work with funding sources; the proceedings of site visits and formal reviews; routine reports of activities and outcomes; forms used for data collection and reporting; and other documents pertaining to the program, its funding, and its operation. The completed questionnaire and attachments are to be sent to the network members charged with conduct of the review.

Estimated time for completion: 12-16 hours for program staff.

## **2. Program Interview**

The second step of the review is an interview with program representatives. This should be scheduled at least one week after members of the network committee have received the completed *Program Information Questionnaire* and materials. The interview format follows the *Program Information Questionnaire*, and is intended to be an opportunity for clarification and expansion of the information provided by the program. The network members charged with conduct of the review should read and consider the completed *Program Information Questionnaire* and attachments prior to the interview and come to the interview prepared with questions and issues needing further discussion. The *Review Summary Form* (below) may be used to help focus this process but should not be finalized until after the interview.

**Estimated time for completion: 1.5 – 2 hours as a group.**

## **3. Committee Review Summary**

The third step in the review is the completion of the *Review Summary Form* by the network committee. This should be done as a group, with members collaborating to complete a single consensus form. This process may involve further consultation with program representatives and members are encouraged to involve program administrators in discussions of proposed network actions. The completed *Review Summary Form* is to be sent to the full network membership for discussion, amendment, adoption and action. A copy should also be sent to the program director.

**Estimated time for completion: 1.5 – 2 hours as a group; 1-2 hours for each committee member individually.**

## **4. Network Discussion, Adoption, and Actions**

The committee's *Review Summary Form* will be submitted to the full network membership for discussion and adoption. An invitation to attend the network meeting where this is on the agenda should be provided to program representatives. Any additions to the committee's review and proposed network actions would be considered at this time, and the full membership should agree to a plan and a timeline for their pursuit as applicable. These should include plans for monitoring progress. Program representatives should be included in the discussion and are expected to contribute to considerations of proposed actions.

A record of the review process, including a copy of the *Program Information Questionnaire* and the final *Review Summary Form* should be forwarded to the Family Policy Council.

# MODEL PROGRAM INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

## INSTRUCTIONS

### ***FOCUS OF REVIEW***

**(Specify the focus of the review, clearly identifying the program to be reviewed by the title and funding source. Note any needs to include information on other programs which share resources or management activities).**

The first step of the review is the completion of the *Program Information Questionnaire* (attached). These questions are to be answered by program directors or their representatives. Responses should be brief, with sufficient detail to explain key program features and characteristics. All responses should be typed. There will be opportunity to expand on written responses during the follow-up interview with network members.

The questionnaire includes five topical sections. Each section is divided into several sub-sections with specific questions. These questions are designed to elicit a full presentation of information and issues that are most relevant to the review. Use them as guidelines for responses, adding information as needed to better characterize the program and its processes. Be specific in your responses; avoid generalizations and jargon. Try to phrase your answers so that a community representative could understand and draw conclusions about the information provided.

Please include the following documents with your completed questionnaire

3. Materials that describe the program and its activities, such as an application, a current contract, a Statement of Work, etc.
3. Documents prepared for purpose of review or evaluation reports.
3. Forms used for data collection and reporting
3. Other documents pertaining to the program, its funding, and its operation.

**Provide a copy of the completed questionnaire and all attachments for each member of the network taking part in the review.**

## PROGRAM PLANNING

**Needs Assessment:** Are program services indicated by the findings of current community needs assessments? If so, briefly identify the source of the assessment(s) and how the results support these services. What are the identified needs the program is meeting?



**Research-Based:** Are program services supported by current research knowledge on effective programs for children and families? If so, briefly summarize the major elements of the research support for this program approach. If not, what is the rationale for expecting the program will be effective?

**Community Involvement:** To what extent were community representatives involved in planning for these services? Is there any provision for continuing community review of program activities? Does this include any involvement of representatives from the community's cultural groups? Briefly describe the procedures and approaches you use to involve the community.

**Inclusion in Comprehensive Plan:** Are these services or aspects of these services incorporated in the community's comprehensive plans for services for children and families? To what extent is the program or its services covered in the most current plan of the community network? Identify or describe the applicable plans.

## **COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF SERVICES**

**Other Agency Programs:** Describe how this program is related to other services provided by your agency. Are children and/or families in this program also involved in other agency services or programs, and if so, is their involvement coordinated or case managed? What steps are taken to bring together services, and how effective are these? For example, do you use shared staffing, combined programs, staff teams, etc. to provide seamless services?

**Other Community-Based Services:** Describe how this program is coordinated with other services provided in your community and the extent to which it is part of a system of services for children/families. Note if this includes joint planning with other agencies, participation on boards or standing committees, other review processes, and involvement in any cooperative program initiatives. Are participants in this program referred to other community services and if so, is their participation in these monitored by your program staff? Are these program services blended or combined in any way with those of other agencies or providers?

**Services for Families:** Does the program include services for families, either directly or by referral? Briefly describe how families are involved with program services, and identify typical connections made for families with other agency and community services.

## **RESPONSIVENESS**

**Need Based:** Briefly summarize how the program attempts to provide individualized services responsive to the needs of participants. Is program participation predicated on a structured, individualized assessment process to identify risk and protective factors and service needs? Are program services designed to address each child's or family's specific identified needs? Are interim or progress assessments done throughout program involvement to ensure needs continue to be addressed?

**Flexible:** Describe the range of variability that occurs among participants and program services. How does the program accommodate participants with different or changing needs? Can program services be customized or are they standardized? To what extent do services adjust to meet changes in participant needs over time?

**Cultural Relevance:** How does the program respond to cultural differences among participants and their families? Describe how program staff are trained to recognize and support cultural differences. Does the program offer culturally relevant services or make referrals to these services for children and families?

## **OUTCOMES ORIENTATION**

**Data Collection:** Identify the procedures used for the collection of data on program participants and program processes. Include how data are collected for participant history, at program entry and exit, and during program progress. Do you collect any follow-up information after participants leave the program, and if so, for how long thereafter?

**Data Analysis:** Are you able to readily compile information on program participants and characteristics? What kind of access do you have to information on program outcomes? Do your systems for data analysis allow locally generated questions about program participants and outcomes? How satisfied are you with your capacity to collect information about program outcomes, and what, if anything, would you like to see improved?

**Utilization:** Characterize how you use information on participant characteristics and outcomes. Do you provide regular reports to the state? To the community? Are outcomes information utilized for program review and planning?

**Objectives:** Summarize the long-term and interim objectives of the program. To what extent have you met your interim objectives thus far? Briefly account for any interim objectives not met, including any changes in objectives or data collection strategies proposed to remedy these shortcomings.

## FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

**Eligibility Criteria:** Briefly summarize the process for determining the allocation of state funding for this program. Include information about any formula used for distribution of the program funds to the agency. Are the criteria for distribution of funds satisfactorily tied to your community characteristics and needs?

**Expenditures:** Is the funding available for this program adequate to support optimal staffing and services? Identify and characterize any extent to which restrictions or constraints on spending adversely affect program services.

**Revenue Exchanges:** Have you used resources from other local or state sources to support this program? Please summarize any revenue sharing or other budget shifts made to support the program, including use of local and other state resources, and resources from other communities. Report on contributions of any funds from this program for use by other programs or agencies.

**Barriers:** Identify and describe the extent to which categorical funding poses barriers to the effective use of resources for this program.

**Decategorization:** Funding for the program is presently categorical, that is it is allocated for use by this specific program and in accord with this program's purposes. In its strictest sense, categorical funding would allow no other use of these resources. As resources for this program are actually distributed, there may be some allowance for redistribution of resources among other agency programs or services. What would be the advantages for the community if these funds were fully decategorized, up to and including unrestricted use of resources? Would there be any disadvantages to these funding changes? Would other types of changes in funding or program management improve services and benefit the community?

# MODEL REVIEW SUMMARY FORM

## INSTRUCTIONS

The Review Summary Form is divided into five sections. These cover the primary areas of legislative intent for conduct of a decategorization review. They also overlap with the Family Policy Principles. The form may be used as a guide for conducting the Program Interview. Following the interview, individual committee members may want to independently complete the form and then meet for discussion and finalization of a single set of ratings and recommendations. Alternatively, the committee members may opt to jointly complete the form, making decisions about ratings and recommendations as a group. Either approach is acceptable as long as there is a single final form representing the consensus view of the committee members.

The core features of each of the sections of the form are expressed as a series of statements followed by a rating scale. Complete each of the scales according to how accurately each statement describes the program under review. The statement scale offers five options for scoring. These are:

- 1) **No** – This is not done or is not present.
- 2) **Weak** – This is done or is present, but typically very poorly or inconsistently, with major weaknesses.
- 3) **Partial** – This is done or is present, with mixed results and consistency – some strengths and some weaknesses.
- 4) **Good** – This is done or is present, and typically well and consistently, with minor weaknesses.
- 5) **Excellent** – This is done or is present, with excellent results and consistency – no significant weaknesses.

Each section concludes with a summary scale to provide an overall assessment of the status of the area. This last rating should be based on the combined results of the other ratings in this section, as well as take into account other relevant factors that may not yet have been rated. The overall rating may be better or worse than the individual ratings attached to various statements of program characteristics. The scale used for this rating also has five options, ranging from a “1” for very poor through a “5” for excellent.

There is a space at the end of each section to add any recommendations for program change and improvement. Recommendations should include a plan for network action. This might be a timeline for further review, a plan for providing assistance or support for needed changes, and/or strategies for achieving legislative or administrative changes. The committee should present the completed Review Summary Form and associated recommendations for adoption and action to the full network.

**SECTION I – PROGRAM PLANNING** – This section deals with the program’s rationale and planning processes. It has been determined that the most effective programs are those that consistently take into account local needs and community priorities, are based on research, and involve oversight from community.

			<b>Partial</b>		
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<b>Program Planning</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>with Mixed Results</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
1. The program addresses needs identified in recent community needs assessment(s).	1	2	3	4	5
2. Research supports the effectiveness of program services.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Community representatives were involved in planning for program design.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Community representatives regularly review (at least annually) program services.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Program services are part of one or more comprehensive plans.	1	2	3	4	5

Provide an overall rating of the status of program planning:

	<b>Very Poor.....Excellent</b>				
<b>Overall Assessment -- Planning</b>	1	2	3	4	5

**Recommendations:**

**Proposed Network Actions:**

**SECTION II – COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF SERVICES** – This section concerns the degree to which program services are coordinated and integrated. Well-coordinated programs reduce fragmentation of services and improve efficiency through cross program and inter-agency communication and connections. Integrated services may involve joint efforts of staff across program and agency boundaries, combining efforts in one or more ways to better address needs. The aim is for services to be delivered as part of a systemic approach that ties services together.

<b>Coordination</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Partial with</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
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			<b>Mixed Results</b>		<b>t</b>
1. Children served in the program are linked with other applicable agency services.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Children served in the program are linked with other services in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Families are included in service connections.	1	2	3	4	5
4. There are formal agreements with other community agencies to support coordinated services.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Other service providers are in regular contact with program staff.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The program is part of a system of services for children and families.	1	2	3	4	5

Provide an overall rating of the status of coordination and integration of services:

	<b>Very Poor.....Excellent</b>				
<b>Overall Assessment – Coordination/Integration</b>	1	2	3	4	5

**Recommendations:**

**Proposed Network Actions:**

**SECTION III – RESPONSIVENESS** – This section asks the extent to which program services are responsive to client needs. Such individualized and tailored services are more likely to efficiently and effectively meet needs and lead to positive outcomes.

<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Partial with Mixed Results</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
1. The program services are based on a thorough assessment of individual needs.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Interim assessments are used to ensure services remain responsive.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Program services are flexible enough to meet multiple needs.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Program services accommodate and are supportive of cultural differences.	1	2	3	4	5

Provide an overall rating of the status of the responsiveness of services:

	<b>Very Poor.....Excellent</b>				
<b>Overall Assessment -- Responsiveness</b>	1	2	3	4	5

**Recommendations:**

**Proposed Network Actions:**

**SECTION IV – OUTCOMES ORIENTATION** – This section looks at the program’s capacity to collect and utilize information on outcomes for program improvement. An orientation to outcomes contributes to efficiency by focusing program efforts on specific relevant results, providing information about their attainment for use in program improvement.

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Partial with Mixed Results</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
1. Data collection analysis and procedures characterize participants and chart their outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Outcomes information is regularly compiled and available for review.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Outcomes information is used for program improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Program objectives are relevant and measurable.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The program is meeting or making progress on its interim objectives.	1	2	3	4	5

**Provide an overall rating of the status of the program’s outcomes orientation:**

	<b>Very Poor.....Excellent</b>				
<b>Overall Assessment -- Outcomes</b>	1	2	3	4	5

**Recommendations:**

**Proposed Network Actions:**



**SECTION V – FUNDING** – The final section reviews the status of current program funding and its categorical allocation. Funding restrictions and constraints should not adversely impact program operations and services; funding criteria and conditions should serve to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

<b>Funding</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Partial with Mixed Results</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
1. Criteria for funding are linked to community needs.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Funding levels support optimal program services.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The allocation of funding is sufficiently flexible to respond to changing resource needs.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Categorical funding meets the needs of participants and the community.	1	2	3	4	5

Provide an overall rating of the status of categorical funding:

	<b>Very Poor.....Excellent</b>				
<b>Overall Assessment -- Funding</b>	1	2	3	4	5

**Recommendations:**

**Proposed Network Actions:**

## **Additional Review Model Suggestions**

Unlike Dr. Carlson's model for the Clallam Community Network, which reviews one program at a time, the following models use collective knowledge to review a cluster of programs and services. Professionals, advocates and customers bring a detailed understanding of their own programs to a broader discussion of multiple programs serving the same population. Through this sharing of personal knowledge, a community builds the same sort of information base that the Carlson model builds through serial program reviews.

### **Self-Governance Dialogue**

Founded on principles of communication, inclusion and personal responsibility, the self-governance philosophy provides a framework for bringing all parts of "the system" together around a common purpose. Together, through dialogue, a diverse community comes to a more complete understanding of how it has arrived at its current state of affairs and maps its own course to the future. Self-governance dialogues have led to significant reductions in child out-of-home placements and other positive results in the child welfare system of North Carolina, and may offer a useful model for planning Reviews of Community Efforts.

Gary M. Nelson, associate director for the Jordan Institute for Families at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, writes extensively about the self-governance dialogue method in *Self-Governance in Communities and Families* (San Francisco, Bennet-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2000).

### **The Stark County Experience**

The Stark County Family Council, located in northeast Ohio, is a county-based collaboration whose service providers voluntarily pool funds in order to provide specific services for customers. Stark County deliberately involves families and the public in its decision making processes. It has been extremely successful in reducing both out-of-home placements of children and psychiatric residential placements over the past five years.

A common question which is asked by visitors to Stark County is "How did you initially get everyone together?" The answer in Stark County is "We didn't." As they began to build their infrastructure it was very apparent that the same level of commitment did not exist across every system. Some of the system partners didn't see the potential of an integrated approach and others were so focused on their own system activities that they didn't feel they had time for collaborative efforts....

After the initial development time of getting to know each other and each other's systems, Executives began to realize that they needed to move from an exclusive approach. At this point, trust across Executives had been built, and it became clear that they couldn't accomplish a change agenda by themselves. System Executives developed an intentional process to include other community members and system stakeholders....In particular, this county began to focus on how to target additional children, expand the target to include families as well as children and how to begin to build a system that would allow for cross-system support to occur for all children.

Recognizing that this community would need more than a few pilot projects or staffing functions in order to fundamentally change the response to children and families in need, the community began to develop an Infrastructure which would allow the county to formalize real response to human need.

## **Summary of Information-Gathering Tools**

In conducting a Review of Community Efforts, it will be necessary to gather information from a wide range of people involved in the programs under review. Important tools of this process include:

### **Parent Questionnaire**

Prompts parents and others to reflect on their own experiences as participants in the program.

**Staff Questionnaire**

Draws on staff experiences and ideas regarding specific aspects of the program. May be given to all staff or a sample representing all job descriptions and program components.

**Board Questionnaire**

Solicits feedback of board members on their participation in the oversight of the program.

**Parent Focus Group Guide**

Engages parents in discussing their experiences in the program and captures details and feelings that may be harder for parents to express in a written questionnaire.

**Staff Focus Group Guide**

Engages staff in discussing their experiences working in the program and captures details and feelings that may be harder for staff to express in a written questionnaire.

**Program Observation Tool**

Guidelines for live observation of program activities and program environment.

**Materials Review**

Gives specific criteria for evaluation flyers, program descriptions, board minutes, reports, curricula, newsletters, etc.

## **Chapter 70.190 (Section 005), Revised Code of Washington**

### **Purpose**

The complete text of Section 005 is as follows:

The legislature finds that a primary goal of public involvement in the lives of children has been to strengthen the family unit. However, the legislature recognizes that traditional two- parent families with one parent routinely at home are now in the minority. In addition, extended family and natural community supports have eroded drastically. The legislature recognizes that public policy assumptions must be altered to account for this new social reality. Public effort must be redirected to expand, support, strengthen, and help reconstruct family and community networks to assist in meeting the needs of children. The legislature finds that a broad variety of services for children and families has been independently designed over the years and that the coordination and cost-effectiveness of these services will be enhanced through the adoption of an approach that allows communities to prioritize and coordinate services to meet their local needs. The legislature further finds that the most successful programs for reaching and working with at-risk families and children treat individuals' problems in the context of the family, offer a broad spectrum of services, are flexible in the use of program resources, and use staff who are trained in crossing traditional program categories in order to broker services necessary to fully meet a family's needs. The legislature further finds that eligibility criteria, expenditure restrictions, and reporting requirements of state and federal categorical programs often create barriers toward the effective use of resources for addressing the multiple problems of at-risk families and children. The purposes of this chapter are (1) to modify public policy and programs to empower communities to support and respond to the needs of individual families and children and (2) to improve the responsiveness of services for children and families at risk by facilitating greater coordination and flexibility in the use of funds by state and local service agencies.

## **Chapter 90.170 (Section 110)**

### **The Revised Code of Washington**

#### **Review**

The complete text of section 110, Program Review, is as follows:

- (1) The council, and each network, shall biennially review all state and federal funded programs serving individuals, families, or communities to determine whether a network may be better able to integrate and coordinate these services within the community.
- (3) The council, and each network, shall specifically review the feasibility and desirability of decategorizing and granting, all or part of, the following program funds to the networks:
  - (a) Consolidated juvenile services;
  - (b) Family preservation and support services;
  - (c) Readiness to learn;
  - (d) Community mobilization;
  - (e) Violence prevention;
  - (f) Community-police partnership;
  - (g) Child care;
  - (h) Early intervention and educational services, including but not limited to, birth to three, birth to six, early childhood education and assistance, and headstart;
  - (i) Crisis residential care;
  - (k) Victims' assistance;
  - (k) Foster care;
  - (l) Adoption support;
  - (m) Continuum of care; and
  - (o) Drug and alcohol abuse prevention and early intervention in schools.
- (10) In determining the desirability of decategorizing these programs the report shall analyze whether:
  - (a) The program is an integral part of the comprehensive plan without decategorization;
  - (b) The program is already adequately integrated and coordinated with other programs that are, or will be, funded by the network;
  - (c) The network could develop the capacity to provide the program's services;
  - (d) The program goals might receive greater community support and reinforcement through the network;
  - (e) The program presently ensures that adequate follow-up efforts are utilized, and whether the network could improve on those efforts through decategorization of the funds;
  - (f) The decategorization would benefit the community; and
  - (k) The decategorization would assist the network in achieving its goals.
- (10) If the council or a network determines that a program should not be decategorized, the council or network shall make recommendations regarding programmatic changes that are necessary to improve the coordination and integration of services and programs, regardless of the funding source for those programs.

# Family Policy Principles

The work of the Family Policy Council and the Community Networks is guided by a set of Family Policy Principles, established by the Legislature in 1992, which call for a state system based on:

- Family-oriented services
- Recognition of different cultures
- Collaboration and coordination between agencies
- Innovation and flexibility
- Local planning
- Community-based programs that emphasize prevention
- Better customer service
- Measurable results

## APPENDIX

# **SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF A DECATEGORIZATION REVIEW OF CONSOLIDATED JUVENILE SERVICES PROGRAMS**

For the Washington State Family Policy Council

**Pilot Site: Clallam County**

**Prepared by Katherine A. Carlson, Ph.D., Research Consultant  
Michelle M. Maike, Research Assistant  
December 20, 2001**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Clallam County Community Public Health and Safety Network and Clallam County Juvenile and Family Services volunteered to pilot a process for review of categorical programs for the Family Policy Council. The program identified for review was the Consolidated Juvenile Services (CJS) At-Risk Youth program. In Clallam County, this is the Chronic Offender Special Emphasis Program (COSEP). Family Policy Council contracted with Katherine Carlson to develop the format for the review and oversee its completion. The results of this process were further refined into a model review format for possible use for other programs and by other networks.

The *Final Report* summarizes the steps toward development of the model and the results of its pilot in Clallam County, including agency and network responses to the findings and recommendations of the review. It is divided into three sections. The first outlines the assumptions and tasks that went into the development of the model format. The second covers the application of this model and its modifications during use. The third and final section discusses the results of the review in terms of the Clallam County CJS program itself and the changes in the program following the review. The implications of these changes for the agency, the network, the youth and families served, and the community, are considered as well. All three sections conclude with a discussion of factors that were identified as critical for the selection of a functional model, the conduct of an effective review, and the use of review findings to improve services and relationships.

## **I. APPROACH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL**

The approach for this decategorization review of Consolidated Juvenile Services programs was developed in a series of stages, each building on the proceeding one. The first of these stages was the identification of the underlying premises or assumptions that should guide the review. The next step was the establishment of standards for the collection of information and the conduct of the review. In research terms, this process was a matter of operationalizing the means for collecting data, that is, stating data collection aims in such a way that they could actually be applied and produce information for the intended purpose.

Two types of considerations were involved in determining the project's assumptions and formulating the general standards for the review. The first of these were the information and assumptions that should set the parameters within which any such review may occur. These guidelines came largely from the legislation authorizing the creation of the community networks and requiring them to conduct planning and program review. Secondly they also drew on the Family Policy Principles, looking for inter-



connections between these two types of statements and expressions of values. Taken together these set the framework for what the review would be expected to cover and provided the justification for why the particular approach selected was appropriate.

The second consideration for determining the parameters of the review was to take into account what was feasible for the review and its conduct given the entities involved. This is the “capacity” for doing a program review. In this case, capacity means the community networks and their memberships and characteristics. Capacity also includes the ability of a program and its staff to provide the data and other information needed for the review. Time is another capacity factor since program reviews cannot require more than a modest investment of this resource from either network volunteers or agency staff. Time was particularly critical in the Clallam County review, with only a few months available to design the model and conduct the review prior to the end of the fiscal year and funding for its pilot. These considerations constitute the pragmatics of a review, outlining what is possible and reasonable for its conduct.

A key feature of network program review is that it is conducted by a body external to the program provider and in accord with the community and its self-defined needs – that is, completed by the network members who are the community’s representatives. The content of the model review format had to be consistent with this membership and in keeping with community concerns. Within this structure, it needed to be possible for agency representatives to provide information about how services are delivered, the extent to which these addressed community needs, and the degree to which they accorded with the principles guiding the network. This information would serve as the basis for the network’s assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of categorical funding.

The combination of guidelines, constraints, and capacities that provided the foundation for building the model format are summarized as follows:

1. The common parameters for all program reviews are outlined in the characteristics found by the legislature to be associated with successful programs as stated in the RCW;
2. Overall, these encompass and reinforce the Family Policy Principles and, like these, primarily concern the processes of service delivery;
3. As such, the purpose of program review by the community networks is to examine the means rather than the ends of services, with service outcomes pre-identified as better if they are the result of the processes identified in the above statements;
4. The categorical review is explicitly charged to focus on process or service delivery, with this review also to be guided by the parameters of effective programs;
5. An additional charge associated with the categorical review is that it determine the extent to which service delivery (and by extension, outcomes) would be improved if funding were decategorized or there were other programmatic changes;
6. In this, the operational consequences of current categorical funding procedures are clearly the intended focus, with findings about these to be considered in regard to community interests and possible alternatives; and
7. The network is to utilize the results of the categorical review to recommend ways in which program processes and/or funding could be improved to better accord with the principles found to be associated with successful programs.

## **Critical Factors for Further Reviews**

- **Be realistic in expectations for the content of the review:** Recognize that program review cannot be a technical task when volunteers of diverse backgrounds and expertise are primarily responsible

for its conduct. Such diversity and voluntary status are consistent with the network's role to express community values and establish local priorities, and the conduct of program review should also draw on these features as the primary advantage of community networks. The program review model thus must not be based on specific program expertise, since the exercise of such expertise is not part of network function. Similarly, analysis of technical data and complex calculations are incompatible with the premise of network membership. Although staff or external consultants may be available to assist in the process of data analysis and review, their time is likely to be limited. More importantly, the charge for review is to the network members themselves, and any others involved should play a strictly supportive and facilitative role.

- **Do not place too heavy a reporting burden on the reviewed program:** While responsiveness to community requests for information is a responsibility of a public agency, it is only one of many such responsibilities, and network requests for information should not make unreasonable demands of the agency and its staff. In particular, the review process should not detract from or interfere with service delivery. Agency records and record keeping procedures were not established to satisfy the needs of program review, and it is impossible or impractical for an agency to answer every conceivable question about its services and their results. Questions and required responses must not demand a large amount of staff time.
- **Phrase questions so that they generate descriptive responses about specific areas of review interest:** Again, remember that this is a review, not an audit. The kinds and level of information needed for forming the judgements of program quality and adequacy expected from networks are best elicited by open-ended questions. The objective is to obtain an overview of program efforts within the specific criteria established for program reviews. Resist the inclination to seek more and deeper information about the details of program operations. Concentrate rather on information that contributes to an understanding of how the program's activities conform to or deviate from the network's criteria for effective programs. Use questions that elicit accounts of how activities are conducted and the basis or rationale for doing this. These will give networks what is needed to complete the review.

## II. PILOT OF THE MODEL IN CLALLAM COUNTY

The Clallam County Community Network appointed a committee of three members to conduct the review. All committee members were non-fiduciary representatives, and included individuals with links to the remoter areas of Clallam County. One member had been with the network since its inception, another had several years of membership background, and the final one had just recently been appointed. The Director of Clallam County's Juvenile and Family Services was also an original and active member of the Community Network.

One member met with the consultant and the Juvenile Services director in early May to review the proposed process for the review and the general standards identified for its conduct. This approach was then presented to the full network membership and the other two members of the committee on May 14, 2001. These general standards were also the focus of discussion with the Tacoma Urban Network, whose members invited the consultant to meet with them as they considered prospects for conducting their own review. The results of these considerations and discussions produced a set of questions and informational requests that the network members could employ to collect information for the review. They also were used to design a set of instruments linked to these questions for recording the members' assessments. Juvenile Services staff reviewed and commented on the questions which would be asked of them and the draft instruments used for the assessment prior to their use in the pilot review.

The review process was envisioned as a collaboration between the network and the program. The pilot review in Clallam County included four sequential steps.

- 1) **Program Information** – in which the agency responsible for program operation provided the network committee various materials characterizing the program and its practices, and provided written responses to specific questions about the program in regard to the legislative and Family Policy Council guidelines. These were recorded on the *Program Information Questionnaire*;
- 2) **Program Interview** – during which the network committee members interviewed program representatives about these materials and responses, seeking clarification and further information as needed to understand program efforts in regard to the legislative and Family Policy Council guidelines;
- 3) **Committee Review Summary** – the process by which the network committee reviewed and discussed their findings, sharing their views of program adherence to review guidelines, and developing consensus. The formal results of this consensus were recorded on the *Review Summary Form*; and
- 4) **Network Discussion, Adoption, and Actions** – the final step in the review was for the committee and the program representatives to bring the results of the review before the full network board for discussion, adoption, and action.

Ideally, the schedule for a program review would allow for sufficient time for all steps, and would be coordinated with representatives of the program under review to ensure full attention to their completion. During the pilot, the Juvenile Services director and staff had approximately a week in which to complete their responses to the final draft of the *Program Information Questionnaire*. The staff divided the work according to expertise and familiarity with the program processes dealt with in each question. These responses were typed and mailed out to the network committee and the consultant. The network committee received the completed *Program Information Questionnaire* just a few days prior to meeting with program staff for the next step of the process, the Program Interview. This left little time for members to read and consider the agency response. They also were not provided with the background materials about the program and its requirements until these were passed out during the Program Interview. These materials should have accompanied the *Program Information Questionnaire*, and their inclusion would have clarified the program's purpose for the review committee.

Even with the short time allowed for consideration, however, the CCCN committee members had sufficiently familiarized themselves with the purpose of the review to ask critical and probing questions of agency representatives during the Program Interview. This interview was conducted on June 21, 2001, and included the program administrator, the lead probation officer, and the program assistant – the Juvenile Services director was unable to attend but was available by telephone. Committee members decided to defer completing the *Review Summary Form* until they had a chance to read materials about the program and consider these data together with information provided in the interview. They would then complete their individual *Review Summary Forms*. A second committee meeting was scheduled for the following week. In the interim, two of the committee members took the opportunity to talk to others in the community about the program, with one contacting several individuals from other programs and services.

During the final committee meeting, each member presented her independently completed *Review Summary Form* and discussed her ratings and the rationale for these. Each rating scale on the form was discussed separately. Where there were differences in ratings among committee members, the reasons for rating high or low were talked about, and these views were used to come up with a consensus rating on which all members agreed. In some cases, the member with the lower rating agreed to take a more favorable view; in others, a member with a higher rating agreed to lower her assessment based on the concerns of others. Following the rating of each section on the form, members discussed desired

changes and recommendations for the section as a whole. These included possible network actions, with these generally being to monitor and review the agency's steps to improve the program. The pilot use of the forms led to identification of several areas where wording or organization could have been improved, and these improvements were incorporated during the meetings and included on the forms submitted to the Family Policy Council.

The consultant acted as a facilitator throughout the review process. This role included organizing and coordinating necessary meetings and guiding the members through the tasks required for each meeting. The consultant did not contribute to decisions about the assessment of the program directly. There were several points in the two final review meetings during which the consultant clarified the purpose or intent of specific questions. She also drew on her own background with the program and its activities to provide additional relevant information about program activities and constraints. One of the main contributions of the consultant during the review process was ensuring that the discussion by members stayed focused on the program under review and did not extend to cover other programs or services. This narrow focus was essential for a fair review that held the program accountable only for what was rightly assigned to and required of it. The committee could (and did) recommend that these responsibilities be expanded to include other functions.

The results of the review and the committee's recommendations were first presented to the Director of Clallam County Juvenile and Family Services by the consultant. This included detailing the content of the committee's discussion and outlining its concerns on each section. Mid-way through this process, the director began to develop ideas for how the program could be changed to become more responsive to the issues identified in the review. Much of the meeting was spent brainstorming possibilities for a revised COSEP program for the next CJS funding cycle. The shape of this program came directly from the elements covered by the review and called for by the Community Networks. The director and his administrative staff developed a preliminary plan for this new program to submit to the network as the agency's response to the results of the review.

The full network membership met in August to receive the results of the review and take action on the committee's recommendations. One committee member attended this session; another could not attend due to previous vacation plans, and the third's intention to connect remotely from another location was thwarted by technical problems. The Director of Juvenile and Family Services also was unavailable, and the administrator directly responsible for the program filled his role. Unlike the director, this individual is not a member of the network. The consultant presented the committee's report and recommendations and the Juvenile Services administrator provided information about the proposed new COSEP program. Network members had a number of questions about the conduct of the review and its outcomes, but seemed to have no clear vision of what the network's subsequent role should be in pursuing its results. The meeting ended with a general motion to adopt the committee's review, without citing any specific future expectations for follow-up.

Juvenile Services staff proceeded to develop the revised COSEP program in time for submission as part of its pending application for CJS funding, due in October. JRA representatives were informed of the plans for program changes, and expressed interest in the changes proposed for the program. In September, Juvenile services staff and administrators met with the consultant to refine strategies for COSEP entry and tracking of outcomes. The agency had already determined the scope of the program and had identified a senior probation officer to serve as its case manager. The agency itself planned to contribute funding to allow COSEP services to also be offered to youth who did not meet the CJS criteria as moderate or high risk. The standards used for screening youth as eligible for COSEP were drafted at the meeting and then refined to fit existing tools and measures. These screening measures were linked to several outcome measures, also utilizing these existing tools. The participants also

discussed the role for the existing COSEP community boards in the revised program. This included final selection of participants, participation in case management, and review of progress.

The full Clallam County Community Network met in September to review and take action on the plans for the CJS application and the revised COSEP program. The network's primary role in these actions was as the advisory committee for the Juvenile and Family Services department, with the board's approval required as part of the agency's submission for CJS funding. Pete Peterson, network member and the director of Clallam County Juvenile and Family Services, led the discussion. All three of the members who had formed the committee for the program review attended the meeting and spoke to how the proposal for COSEP changes was responsive to the findings of the review. The network approved the CJS application as proposed and agreed to meet with representatives from JRA and Juvenile Services staff for a six-month review of program activities. This agreement put in place the review committee's recommendations for network oversight of COSEP activities and program changes called for by the review. The submitted CJS proposal is attached.

### **Critical Factors for Further Reviews**

- **Clearly delineate the program under review:** A given population is likely to receive multiple programs and services, and many of these may come from the same agency and carry similar names and characteristics. Doing program review requires that each discrete program entity be assessed separately, in terms of its own conditions and constraints and in regard to its own outcomes. To do otherwise not only does a disservice to the program provider, who may be performing admirably under the regulations that cover the program. It also risks obscuring the capacity of the review to identify when these regulations or categorical directives are hindering program effectiveness and which, if any, may need to be removed or amended. This capacity is the primary reason for the network to do program review, and thus must be assured. Drawing such fine and distinctive programmatic lines can be difficult for reviewers, but they must resist the temptation to judge a program more broadly than is warranted. The broader task of system reform can only occur one program at a time, and each program review represents a critical step towards that end.
- **Seek diversity of perspectives among network and program participants:** The varied backgrounds and experiences of the members of the review committee enriched the review in Clallam County. This diversity not only ensured that the community's geographic and cultural differences were represented, it also brought to the discussion the perspectives of citizens with different personal and professional backgrounds and varied reasons for involvement with the network. These are the special qualities the Community Networks bring to the task of program review. Diversity also proved to be a useful characteristic among the program administrators and staff who participated in the Program Interview. The participants in Clallam County had knowledge of and direct experiences with the program's procedures and activities. These representatives also were not necessarily practiced in the politically correct ways of describing program services and linkages, and were candid and forthright in their responses to questions about program strengths and weaknesses. All reviews should seek to involve lower level staff and administrators who actually work with the program. They can offer insights about program activities that would not necessarily be available from agency directors.
- **Utilize a consultant or external facilitator for at least the formal review sessions:** Program review will be difficult for networks to do without some external assistance. Network members do have the primary role in actually doing the program review, and network staff can perform the administrative and organizational tasks needed for this to occur. A consultant could also assume these duties. In particular, the network's staff person is unlikely to be able to act as facilitator for

review meetings. These require a manager who is determinedly neutral and objective, and may also demand an assertive role with network members to ensure the review stays on track. This role is best assumed by a party identified as external to the regular activities of the network. Writing the summary of the review and drafting the recommendations that will be brought to the full network board is also best assigned to such an outside consultant, who should work closely with the review committee to ensure their views are well presented. These additional services need not be extensive, and could be shared depending on the time and skills of network staff.

## I. RESULTS OF THE REVIEW

The program review of Clallam County's CJS program did not lead to a recommendation for changes in program funding or regulations. The review committee accepted that the reductions in categorical funding restrictions that were underway by the Juvenile Court Administrators statewide would substantially resolve any concerns the members had about adverse program impacts from categorical funding. Nor did the committee find any needs for changes in the regulations governing the program, also concluding that program administrators were effectively managing any needs in this area. These conclusions did not mean, therefore, that the review made no difference to program operations and particularly, that it was ineffective. The results were quite the opposite, despite the lack of need for any formal actions in response. The review had a substantial impact on the Clallam County COSEP program which was its focus, effectively leading to a transformation of the program and contributing to a stronger role in program oversight for the network.

The committee's findings that program processes did not well realize their potential to provide integrated and coordinated services were used as the basis for the revised program. The review led to program changes through its illumination of current program inadequacies. It is believed that these findings generated the desire and willingness for the program staff to change in large part because they came from a joint process of examination and exploration. Both the network committee members and the program staff and administrators participated, and thus the conclusions of the committee were not seen as the views of outsiders but as reasoned and reasonable responses to the information they received.

There was little argument from the agency for sustaining the program as it was prior to the review, a consequence of how much the program staff itself learned in the course of looking at their activities through the lens of the review format. This set of criteria served as a relatively neutral frame for a much-needed critical look at how the program operated and why. The COSEP program had not been subjected to similar considerations since its initiation a decade previously. Community needs and priorities had changed in the interim, including a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention in the county's juvenile services. The revised program is not only closer to Family Policy principles and Community Network aims, it is also more in keeping with trends in juvenile justice and the philosophy of juvenile services in Clallam County. The revised program is likely to be stronger because it was based on community input from the network and its members. It is also likely to be stronger because it will be a reasoned response to current needs, incorporates characteristics of effective services, and is not just a routine continuation of an unexamined program.

The Clallam County Community Network benefited from the review as well. Through the efforts of its review committee, the members realized that they had all the skills and background needed to carry out program review. One committee member reflected on her uncertainty in these regards when she began the review, and spoke of how she found that her knowledge as a network member and community resident were all she needed to confidently carry out its tasks. This is a critical recognition. The network also entered a new and more activist role with the Juvenile Services agency. Although this role was assumed some six months previously when the network agreed to act as the agency's advisory committee, its implications and responsibilities were clarified when the network was asked to adopt the program revisions called for by its own committee. The network's future involvement in routine review with representatives from the JRA should further engage the members in community programs. Such a function is incorporated in the network's enabling legislation, but in Clallam County at least, had not been often done. The Juvenile services programs are expected to benefit from this greater network involvement as well, and through this, so are services for the community's children and families.

## Critical factors for Further Reviews

- **There are many possible, desirable outcomes from a review:** There is no particular optimal result of a program review other than that the review be done and done well. The process of review is more important than some specific product and networks are cautioned to not undertake the review function with any particular end in sight. All programs are likely to have areas where they could improve, and these may or may not involve changes in their categorical funding or regulatory guidelines. All programs are also likely to have strengths, and one of the aims of the review is to identify these so they can be extended and reinforced. By entering the review function with an open agenda, networks are most likely to be able to critically examine program processes and offer genuine assistance to program providers. In Clallam County, the need for decategorizing funding guidelines became moot with actions simultaneously underway by Juvenile Court administrators and the JRA; the network role became to support these actions. What the review did in Clallam County was perhaps more significant than relaxing funding strictures would have been. Being reviewed led the agency to question how program services were delivered and their consequences, and the content of the review offered alternatives to these practices as well as promised better outcomes. The benefits from a critical look should be the result of all reviews, and will occur if the network and the agency take seriously their roles as partners in the review process. The program changes that will be put in place in Clallam County were not so predictable, but something like these should be the product of applying Community Network standards and Family Policy Principles to community programs.
- **Networks need some guidelines for what will follow the results of a review:** Once the review was completed, the members of the Clallam County Community Network had no plans for what should follow other than transmitting results to the Family Policy Council. To some extent, this may have been a consequence of having a consultant rather than network staff do all the tasks associated with organizing and managing the review. Future reviews should include more of a role for network staff to ensure some preparation for assuming follow-up tasks. Even with staff involvement, however, the existing guidelines for doing reviews and dealing with their results do not offer much information about subsequent expectations. While each review and each network will have different follow-up requirements, networks need some framework for how to develop and pursue these. In Clallam County, the next steps were made relatively straightforward by the network's role as an advisory body to Juvenile Services; other reviews may not have this ready-made solution for continued oversight. Technical assistance to respond to and incorporate the recommendations from a review might also be appropriate for the network and for the reviewed program. Clallam County needed some assistance to formalize its revised program and develop more accurate and sophisticated ways of tracking its processes and identifying its outcomes. This extra help ensured that the program changes desired by the network members were incorporated into the revised program.



**RESULTS OF COMMUNITY NETWORK PROGRAM REVIEW  
IN CLALLAM COUNTY  
Highlights of Changes in the 2001-01 CJS (At-Risk) Project**

	<b>BEFORE REVIEW</b>	<b>AFTER REVIEW</b>
<b>Program Title</b>	COSEP – Chronic Offender Special Emphasis Program	COSEP – Coordination of Services Special Emphasis Program
<b>Target Population</b>	Moderate to high-risk youth on probation, with a recent pattern of escalated or more serious delinquent behavior in the community or school.	Moderate to high-risk youth on probation with indications of problems in school and mental health and/or substance abuse. Also low risk/non-offender youth supported by local funding.
<b>Status at Entry</b>	Non-compliant, resistant to standard approach.	Willing and ready to change.
<b>Program Services</b>	Heightened supervision and attention to strict accountability with probation conditions, including immediate sanctions for violations.	Case management, including assessment for needs for supports and services for school, mental health and/or substance abuse problems, referrals and facilitation of needed services, support and follow up.
<b>Family Role</b>	No specific involvement or outreach.	Efforts to engage and involve family; referrals for family needs for supports and services.
<b>Community Role</b>	Representatives from probation, police, schools and social services attend monthly meetings, select participants, share information about youth, and jointly discuss status and needs for further action. Main function was information exchange, with aim to improve accountability with conditions of probation through coordinated attention to compliance.	Representatives from probation, police, schools and social services attend monthly meetings; select participants share information about youth, and jointly discuss status and needs for further action. Main function will be to provide needed services and exchange information with aim to coordinate interventions and to improve participation and outcomes.

<b>Accountability and Integration</b>	Staffed part-time by 1 FTE made up of administrative assistant and multiple probation officers; most information sharing occurred verbally during meetings, with no systematic tracking of progress and status outside of probation conditions and the probation officer's records. Connections with other agencies maintained through the youth's probation officer.	Staffed by full-time case manager; information on each participant's status in school, mental health, substance abuse, criminal behaviors, and family concerns recorded on monthly progress form and shared at meetings. Connections with probation services and other agencies coordinated by the case manager.
<b>Network Role</b>	None identified.	GJJAC Advisory body to Juvenile Services; network approved CJS application and will participate in six month reviews with JRA.
<b>Interim Outcomes</b>	1) Decrease expulsions and out-of-school suspensions; 2) Increase regular progress toward completion of court-ordered community service work.	Two types of Indicators. Progress indicators: 1) Satisfactory follow through on referrals; 2) satisfactory participation in or completion of recommended services. Outcome indicators: 1) Improved school attendance, behavior, & academics; 2) Relationships with supportive adults; 3) Reduced alcohol/drug use and its contribution to crime; 4) Improvements in self-control; and 5) Improvements in pro-social function.
<b>Evaluation Capacity</b>	Poor – outcomes not closely linked to program purposes; no instruments for data collection; no standards for judging effectiveness; and difficulties obtaining pre-program data from schools.	Excellent – outcomes explicitly linked to program purposes; data from existing state Risk Assessment and new program instruments; and standards set for judging effectiveness.